

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Project Review Committee

August 28, 2025 4:00 pm

Remote Participation via Zoom

Draft Minutes

Project Review Committee Members

x	Lee Cattaneo, Orange Commissioner
x	John Brabant, Calais Commissioner
x	Bill Arrand, Worcester Commissioner
	Peter Carbee, Washington Commissioner
x	Robert Wernecke, Berlin Commissioner
x	Alice Peal, Waitsfield Alternate Commissioner

1 Staff: Lorraine Banbury, Sam Lash, Christian Meyer, Keith Cubbon

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3 Public: None

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5 L. Cattaneo called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

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7 Public comment

8 None

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10 Adjustments to the Agenda

11 No changes were made to the posted agenda. J. Brabant inquired whether the project review report and
12 criteria discussion were separate agenda items or part of the same report; staff clarified that these were
13 part of the same agenda item.

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15 Public Comment

16 No members of the public were present; no public comment was offered.

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18 Approval of Minutes

19 J. Brabant moved to approve the August 4, 2025 draft minutes, noting he was not present but had
20 reviewed them carefully. R. Wernecke seconded. Hearing no discussion, the motion passed
21 unanimously.

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23 Project Review Report & Case Updates

24 Staff presented the current list of projects under review. R. Wernecke and J. Brabant discussed the
25 Berlin Mall redevelopment hearings, noting the number of hearings held and the positive
26 transformation of the site into a mixed-use, community-oriented space. Commissioners also briefly
27 discussed a new proposal for 29 Main Street to be converted into 16 apartments and 6 retail spaces, as
28 well as a conceptual daycare facility for 150 children at Colby Farm in Middlesex. Commissioners
29 discussed the likely parking challenges for the Main Street project and broader state trends toward
30 reducing parking requirements.

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1 **Project Review Guidelines and Criteria**

2 J. Brabant asked for clarification on the recent edits to the Project Review Guidelines, specifically where
3 the term 'Substantial Regional Impact' had been replaced. Staff explained that the new language was
4 intended to provide clearer and more flexible guidance for when the committee should engage in
5 project review, beyond only conflicts between municipal and regional plans. The committee expressed
6 support for the broader, more practical approach to triggering review.

7
8 **Conservation Easements**

9 J. Brabant raised a question about the committee's role regarding conservation easements such as the
10 Fitch Farm proposal in Calais. R. Wernecke suggested that the committee should only review easements
11 that fall within designated growth areas to avoid potential conflicts with the regional plan. Staff
12 confirmed that future easement notices that meet this criteria will be compiled and shared so the
13 committee can determine if comment is warranted.

14
15 **Act 250 & Section 248 Updates**

16 Staff shared that more Section 248 projects are expected as developers seek to take advantage of
17 federal credits. There was discussion of upcoming Tier II and Solar for All RFPs. Commissioners briefly
18 considered whether towns should identify preferred sites for >500 kW projects. Staff will continue to
19 monitor state-level tax discussions that affect municipal revenues from energy projects.

20
21 **Hazard Mitigation & Floodplain Projects**

22 Staff presented a detailed update on the Pioneer Dam removal and Jacob Davis Homestead floodplain
23 restoration projects in Montpelier. The projects aim to increase flood storage, reconnect floodplains,
24 and reduce flood depths through the US-2/302 corridor. R. Wernecke and L. Cattaneo expressed
25 concern about potential unintended downstream impacts of lowering water levels and emphasized the
26 need for a comprehensive hydraulic analysis of the river system. R. Wernecke also questioned the
27 modeling assumptions, suggesting a two-foot difference in flood levels, cautioning that results should be
28 carefully reviewed. Staff noted that funding and permit processes will require further review before
29 construction proceeds.

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31 **Next Meeting**

32 The committee confirmed that meetings will continue on the fourth Thursday of each month at 4:00 PM
33 unless cancelled for lack of agenda items.

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35 **Adjournment**

36 R. Wernecke moved to adjourn. A. Peal seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was
37 adjourned at 5:42 PM.